



A STUDY ON THE MENACE OF DRUG ABUSE AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN KOTTAKAL MUNICIPALITY

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ABSTRACT

Adolescent drug abuse is a significant societal issue, influenced by peer pressure, curiosity, and stress, and is particularly prevalent among youth aged 16 to 25. This demographic is experimenting with a range of substances, from cigarettes and alcohol to harder drugs like cocaine and heroin, posing a threat to their health and future. Understanding the patterns, motivations, and consequences of drug use among adolescents is crucial for developing effective prevention and intervention strategies, as this stage of rapid development makes them especially vulnerable to substance abuse.

KEYWORDS: Adolescent, Drug Abuse, Peer Pressure, Prevention, Intervention, Vulnerability

INTRODUCTION

Adolescent drug abuse is one of the most pressing issues in contemporary society, garnering significant attention from parents, educators, policymakers, and healthcare professionals worldwide. Adolescence is a critical developmental stage marked by rapid physical, emotional, and cognitive changes, making individuals particularly susceptible to experimenting with various substances. Factors such as peer pressure, curiosity, and the search for stress relief often drive adolescents toward drug use, which can include legal substances like alcohol and cigarettes as well as illegal drugs like cocaine and heroin (Smith, 2022). Understanding the patterns, motivations, and consequences of adolescent drug use is crucial for developing effective prevention and intervention strategies.

The increasing prevalence of drug abuse among adolescents highlights the urgent need for comprehensive approaches to address this issue. Recent incidents involving college students caught in drug-related cases underscore the widespread nature of the problem, which affects various age groups but is particularly pronounced among youth aged 16 to 25. This demographic, in the midst of transitioning from adolescence to young adulthood, faces significant risks from drug use, including severe physical and mental health consequences (Johnson, 2023). The global menace of drug and substance abuse among teenagers poses a serious threat to the future generation, with millions of youths experimenting with substances ranging from cigarettes and alcohol to harder drugs like cocaine, cannabis, and heroin (Brown, 2021).

Over the past decades, the rates of drug abuse have been steadily increasing, with estimates from the World Drug Report indicating that between 153 million and 300 million people aged 15 to 64 have consumed illicit drugs. In response to this growing crisis, governments worldwide have implemented various strategies to reduce drug supply and demand and to provide high-quality treatment and recovery systems. For

instance, the UK government's policy paper "From Harm to Hope: A 10-Year Drugs Plan to Cut Crime and Save Lives," published on December 16, 2021, represents a comprehensive effort to address drug abuse by involving the entire government and public services in creating a safer, healthier, and more productive society (Office for National Statistics, 2021). Drug addiction, especially among teenagers, leads to profound emotional and physical effects, including mood swings, depression, and severe health issues such as heart attack and respiratory problems, emphasizing the need for sustained efforts in prevention and intervention (American Psychiatric Association, 2020).

METHODOLOGY

The study on "Usage of Drugs among adolescents with special reference to Kottakkal Municipality" employs a qualitative research approach, gathering data from both primary and secondary sources.

Primary Data Collection

The primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. The semi-structured interviews allowed for in-depth discussions and insights from participants, enabling the researchers to explore the underlying reasons and motivations behind adolescent drug use. Questionnaires were distributed to a broader demographic within Kottakkal Municipality, including adolescents, parents, educators, and community leaders, to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the prevalence and impact of drug use in the area.

Secondary Data Collection

Secondary data were sourced from a variety of recent reports and publications from both governmental and non-governmental organizations. These sources include statistical reports, policy documents, and research studies that provide context and background to the findings from the primary data. Additional secondary data were obtained from magazines,

websites, academic articles, and relevant books. These sources were instrumental in framing the research within the broader context of adolescent drug use and its implications on society.

By combining these methods, the study ensures a thorough examination of the issue, capturing both the lived experiences of individuals within Kottakkal Municipality and the broader trends and patterns identified in existing literature.

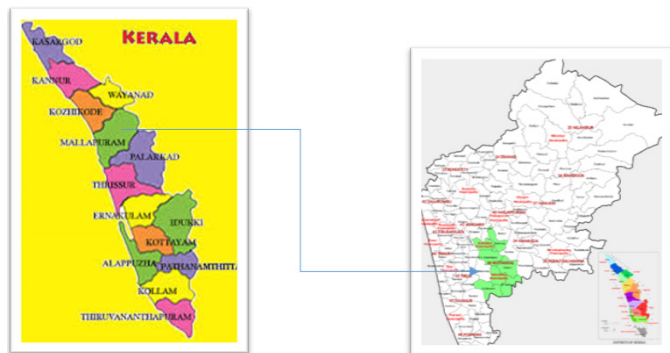


Figure 1: Showing Kottakkal Municipality in Malappuram district, Kerala State

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study on drug usage among adolescents in Kottakkal Municipality reveals alarming trends and provides critical insights into the patterns, reasons, and impacts of substance abuse in this demographic. With a population of about 44,382, Kottakkal Municipality, established in 2010, faces significant challenges as 63% of surveyed adolescents reported having used drugs, indicating a prevalent issue within the community. The study's findings underscore the need for urgent and targeted intervention strategies.

Prevalence and Regular Use of Drugs

According to the data collected, a significant majority (63%) of the adolescents surveyed admitted to regular drug use. This high percentage indicates a deeply rooted issue within the community that transcends occasional or experimental use. The reasons behind this extensive drug use vary, with the influence of friends being the most cited reason (67%), followed by social media (21%), and family ignorance (12%). These findings align with prior research which suggests that peer pressure and social influences are critical factors in adolescent substance abuse (Hawkins et al., 1992). The data from this study supports the notion that the social environment significantly impacts adolescents' decisions regarding drug use (Steinberg, 2008).

Impact on Health and Academic Performance

The adverse effects of drug use among adolescents are evident in both their physical health and academic performance. Out of the respondents, 64% reported experiencing health issues due to their drug use, including both physical and psychological problems. Additionally, 82% of the adolescents acknowledged that their drug use negatively affected their academic life. This highlights the far-reaching consequences of substance abuse, which not only jeopardizes the health of the youth but also their educational and future professional prospects. These findings

are consistent with studies indicating that drug abuse is linked to a range of negative outcomes including poor academic performance and various health issues (DuPont et al., 2010).

Gender, Age Distribution, and Family Influence

The study also sheds light on the gender and age distribution of drug use among adolescents. Drug use is more prevalent among males (67%) compared to females (33%). Age-wise, the highest percentage of drug users (70%) falls within the 16-20 age group, followed by 13-16 years (21%), and a smaller proportion in the 10-13 years age group (9%). Additionally, family influence plays a significant role, with 71% of respondents indicating that they have family members who use drugs. This familial connection suggests a cycle of substance abuse that may perpetuate across generations, complicating efforts to curb the problem. Research has shown that familial patterns of substance abuse can influence adolescent behavior significantly (Brook et al., 1990).

Attempts to Quit and Willingness to Seek Help

Interestingly, a substantial portion of the adolescents (82%) reported having tried and failed to stop using drugs, highlighting the challenges they face in overcoming addiction. However, there is a positive note as 73% expressed willingness to undergo counselling through the Vimukthi Mission, a program aimed at drug rehabilitation. This willingness to seek help indicates that with proper support and intervention, many adolescents are open to changing their behaviors and overcoming their addictions. This aligns with findings from studies indicating that adolescent readiness to engage in treatment programs significantly enhances the chances of successful rehabilitation (Winters et al., 2000).

Overall, the study's results emphasize the critical need for comprehensive prevention and intervention programs tailored to the specific dynamics of Kottakkal Municipality. These programs should focus on peer influence, social media's role, family involvement, and providing robust support systems for those willing to seek help. The insights gained from this study are crucial for policymakers, educators, and healthcare professionals in developing effective strategies to combat adolescent drug abuse in the region.

SI No	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	33	63%
2	No	19	37%
3	Total	52	100%

Table 1: Showing Drugs usage percentage

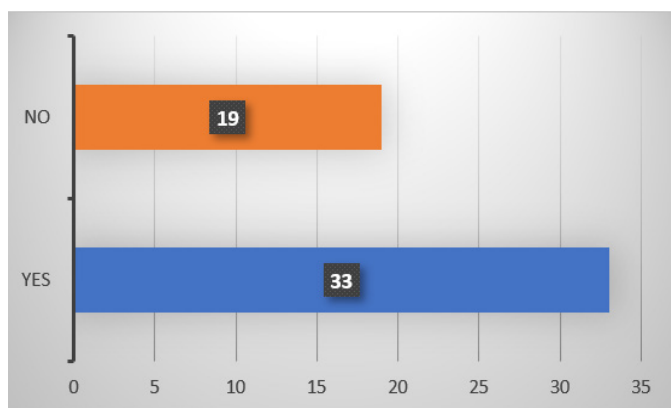


Figure 2: Showing percentage of drugs usage

SI No	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Synthetic	17	52%
2	Tobacco products	9	27%
3	Alcohol	7	21%
4	Total	33	100%

Table 2: Showing types of drugs

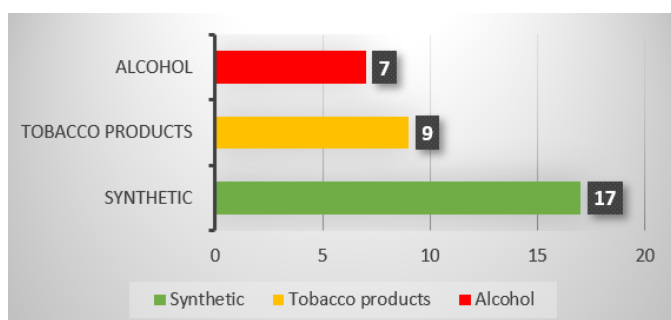


Figure 3: Showing types of drugs

SI No	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	21	64%
2	No	12	36%
3	Total	33	100%

Table 3: Showing various health issues related to drug usage

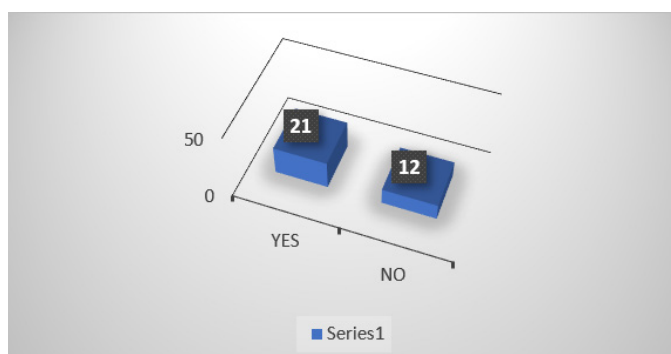


Figure 3: Showing health issues related to drug usage

CONCLUSION

The study on adolescent drug use in Kottakkal Municipality highlights a critical public health issue that demands immediate and multifaceted intervention. With a substantial percentage

of adolescents regularly using drugs, primarily influenced by peers and social media, the impact on their health and academic performance is profoundly negative. The findings underscore the importance of targeted prevention programs that address the social and familial factors contributing to substance abuse. Additionally, the willingness of many adolescents to seek help through counseling programs offers a hopeful pathway for rehabilitation. Effective strategies must involve collaboration among policymakers, educators, healthcare professionals, and community leaders to mitigate this growing menace and support the youth in overcoming addiction, thereby safeguarding their future and the wellbeing of the community.

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